



**Testimony by Richard C. Mullins, Jr.**  
Central Connecticut State University  
Institute of Technology and Business  
Development  
Before the Higher Education and  
Employment Advancement Committee  
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Good morning Senator Bye, Representative Willis and members of the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee. For the record, I am Richard C. Mullins and I am head of the Institute of Technology and Business Development at Central Connecticut State University (CCSU).

I am here to offer comments on Senate Bill 1100, *An Act Establishing a Taskforce to Study the Creation of an Innovation Corps of New Business and Industry Leaders*, and to discuss CCSU's efforts to develop Connecticut's workforce and its business community.

CCSU's Institute of Technology and Business Development (ITBD) has been supporting workforce development in the state for 25 years. Annually, we deliver over 100 workforce training programs. The ITBD, which is located in downtown New Britain, is also home to over 15 mixed use business incubator companies. The structural change in Connecticut's economy as a result of this recession has had an impact on both aspects of the self-supporting services CCSU ITBD provides. We have seen over 95 Workforce Investment Act (WIA) participants in our non-credit open enrollment programs during the past two years. Many who have 15-25 years of professional experience and find themselves out of work and not prepared to re-enter the workforce without major professional development. Those that complete the workforce development programs are getting jobs and/or are starting businesses.

ITBD has also worked with several Connecticut companies that do business internationally, such as Peter Paul Electronics, Acme Monaco Corporation and Fuel Cell Energy. These companies have used CCSU faculty to learn about ISO 9000 quality systems, English as a Second Language for technical staff and global engineering standards. Chambers of Commerce also rely on us at CCSU to link our University resources with their businesses. ITBD serves on the International Business Committee of the Metro Hartford Alliance, and the committee is planning French, German and Virgin Island trade missions to Connecticut. Our role is to help identify companies in Connecticut that can help share their favorable experiences with the state. Recently the U.S. Department of Commerce called on me to join a trade mission to China in February. The Commerce Department regularly calls ITBD to meet with visiting international companies, most recently from Brussels.

The six elements mentioned in this bill provide a very good start for generating new career opportunities and business in our state. Briefly, they are: 1) international connections with companies and institutions of higher education; 2) incentives through international competition for business leaders to come to Connecticut; 3) awards – stipends – investments from competitions to international businesses coming to Connecticut to locate their business; 4) payments to companies for interns and hires; 5) the offer of fellowships to top entrepreneurs who develop a new business in Connecticut; and 6) the use of social media and other new technologies to encourage community projects.

The work proposed for this taskforce has the potential to assist Connecticut in leading the nation in innovation, helped by our incentives, access to multiple business incubation and our skilled workforce. I would respectfully request that the committee consider CCSU ITBD as a member of the task force, as we can contribute our successful experience as a self-supporting resource in the critical areas of workforce and business development.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to share these comments on behalf of Central Connecticut State University. I would be happy to answer any questions that you have at this time.